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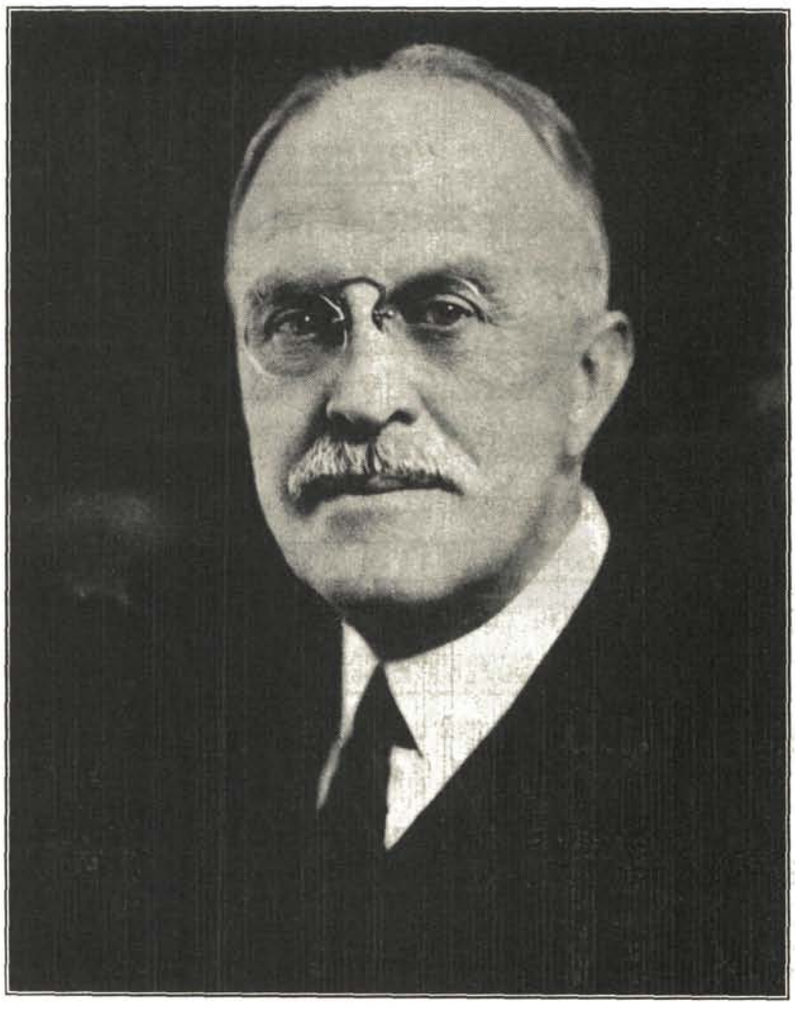

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

"No moral rises so clearly out of Mr. Villard's story as this: that it is not the cowardice of men but the arrogance of men that wrecks the world" . . . *(See page 3)*

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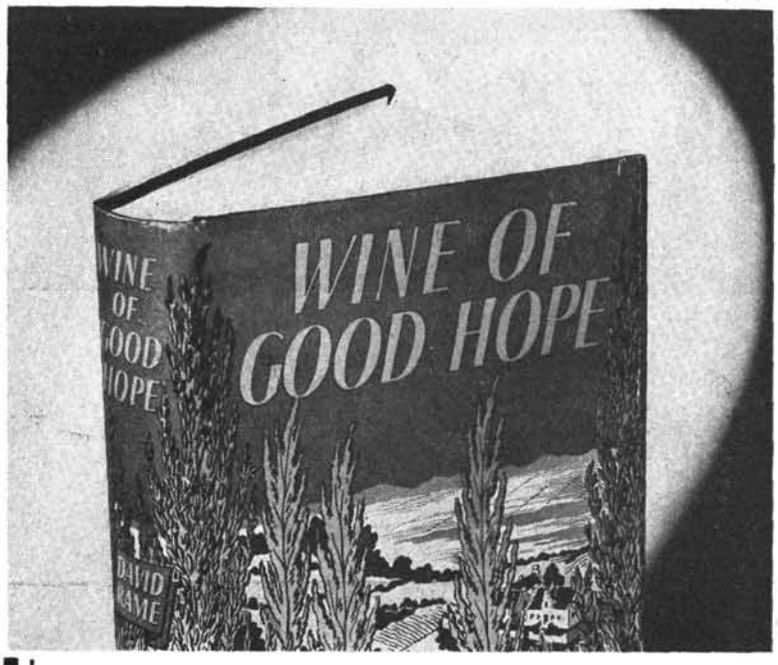

"Gangway ...for another best seller!"

–LEWIS GANNETT

"**ONCE IN A BLUE MOON** there comes a novel so obviously headed for the top of all best seller lists that no reviewer worth his salt could miss the portents (CHICAGO NEWS); **COMES A LOVE STORY** that moves in strength and exquisiteness, beautifully told in a style precisely suited to its events (N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE), **RICH AND VARIED** pageant of contemporary life, clearly the fruit of a first-rate creative ability, **PACKED WITH THRILLS** one might hope to find in a dozen novels, romance and revolution, rich prose and ribaldry, (N. Y. TIMES), **WRITTEN WITH GENUINE DISTINCTION** evidently with a love of words and exactness but fortunately an even greater love of the soil, the sea, the sound qualities in the heart of man (SATURDAY REVIEW), **THE SHEER NARRATIVE GIFT** no other arrival in recent years has come so armed with communicable vision of the roadsteads of life, (PHILA. INQUIRER)

Then It's..."Gangway for another best seller! David Rame's *Wine of Good Hope* has all the earmarks." LEWIS GANNETT

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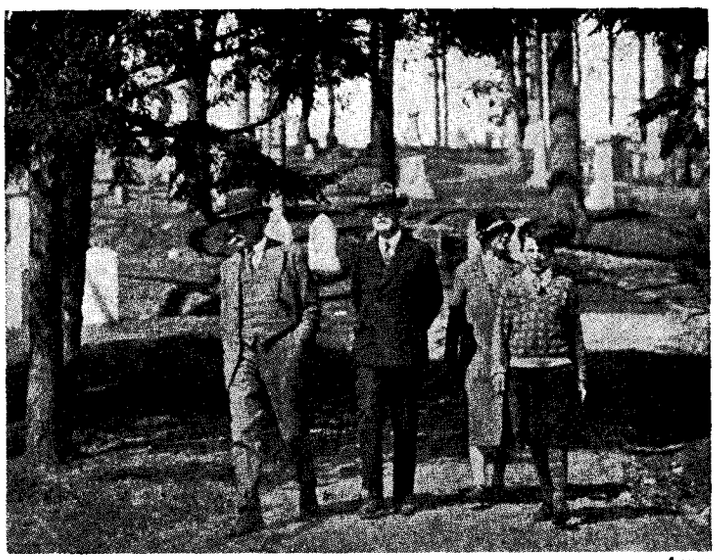
Shock Troops of Reform

FIGHTING YEARS: An Autobiography. By Oswald G. Villard. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1939. $3.75.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE



Acme

J. Ramsay MacDonald, Oswald Garrison Villard, and Ishbel MacDonald (with a volunteer guide) at Concord, Mass.

THE historians of the first three decades of this century will have an easier time getting at the truth of American politics than the historians had who wrote of the last three decades of the nineteenth century. For then, excepting the stories of Civil War generals and Blaine's defensive autobiography, along with Grant's Memoirs, the participants in the struggle in our politics during the last third of the old century wrote little that was helpful. So much of it was conventional biography, a little above Parson Weems.

But today, men and women who participated in the battle for good government in the first three decades of this century are telling their stories with candor and also with convincing detail. No one who was in the thick of events during the days of McKinley, the first Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, has written a braver, finer story than Oswald Garrison Villard in this book, "Fighting Years." It is a story of combat, for Villard was "ever a fighter." On his shoulders fell the mantle of Lawrence Godkin—hardly a mantle, let us say shining armor—and Godkin's struggle harked back to the days of the Mugwumps of the late eighteen seventies, the middle eighties, and the late nineties. Mr. Villard and his kind were the residuary legatees of those shock troops of reform who gathered around Carl Schurz and George William Curtis to fight the first battles for civil service reform and to attack the spoils system. These reformers twice elected Grover Cleveland. His rugged honesty and courage appealed to them. Their heirs and assignees, the twentieth century liberals, espoused more disturbing economic views than Grover Cleveland. These economic views apparently broke the line between the old Mugwumps and the liberals of the first decade of this century.

However, Mr. Villard's story begins where the Mugwumps left off. He comes on the stage when McKinley was wobbling into the Spanish-American War. Mr. Villard's book leaves incontrovertible evidence that McKinley declared war against Spain after Spain had agreed to compromise everything and surrender all that the United States asked as to Cuba. After the Spanish-American War, the Villard story covers a succession of political campaigns against local corruption in New York, against national skullduggery at Washington. It is the glory and the honor of men like Oswald Garrison Villard that they refuse to compromise. They will not take half a loaf and quit fighting. Moreover, their sword knows no friend. Time and again in this story one reads of the tragedy that comes to a man disillusioned, who had high hopes for a cause, only to see it betrayed by his friends. Here in these "Fighting Years" is no merry tale. It is a grim narrative of a man who believes deeply, who cannot condone cowardice or subterfuge, and who fights on in his lonely salient after the commanders have retreated to straighten out the line, fearing to give battle with the realities of the campaign.

Probably nowhere in modern autobiography has been told a more poignant story than Mr. Villard tells when his narrative comes to the Wilson administration. Mr. Villard has set forth the sad weaknesses of an amiable man who believed that his own good intentions were the will of God. The story of Wilson is one of the great American tragedies, and some day it will be dramatized. It is vastly more tragic than the Lincoln story. For in the death of Lincoln his virtue triumphed in failure. In the fall of Wilson the world was disillusioned after his seeming success. More than that, Wilson's compromises wrecked or seem to have wrecked all the machinery he set up to establish world peace.

In this book, "Fighting Years," will be found as it will be found in no other one chronicle the framework for the Wilson tragedy. What a book is waiting to be written about that day and that time and what Wilson's yielding meant and how futile were his noble ideals without great wisdom! These elements of tragedy lie between the lines of Mr. Villard's narrative. Wilson had the ideals and the courage, but he lacked the touch of common sense needed to realize his great vision.

That part of Mr. Villard's autobiography which tells of our entrance into the World War, the peace conference, and the winter of 1918 behind the lines of the Allies in Germany, is a story that has not been told so well before. It is beautifully done. Here is no harsh critic, sitting aloof in wrath, but instead we see a broken-hearted man, walking about in the folly and sorrow of the sad times, setting down the dramatic story of one of the major calamities of the modern world.

Quite apart from its subject matter, wherein the book touches the great events of the last forty years, one may say that its chief charm comes from the fact that Mr. Villard can write. Here is a trained reporter. More than a trained reporter we find Mr. Villard here, seeing the times through the eyes of a man of cultivation, who also has a native gift for writing. He tells his story with grace and charm. Of course it is controversial. The title, "Fight-

Next Week

FIVE CITIES
By GEORGE R. LEIGHTON
Reviewed by George Milburn

THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER
By ELLIOT PAUL
Reviewed by Ben Ray Redman

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ing Years," does not prepare us for a calm, objective study of events. The fighting editor of these "Fighting Years" has told a fighting story. But he has told it like a brave gentleman, beautifully, on the whole kindly even where bitter disillusion crowds the pages.

The young radicals who simplify life and the issues of today should read this book to know how miserably they will fail tomorrow when their time comes, if they try to play providence with tomorrow's issues. No moral rises so clearly out of Mr. Villard's story as this: that it is not the cowardice of men but the arrogance of men that wrecks the world.

William Allen White is the editor of The Emporia Gazette.

The End of Austria

SHOWDOWN IN VIENNA. By Martin Fuchs. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

THIS excellent volume, written by a personal aide to Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, adds to our large collection of informative, colorfully written, and one-sided literature concerning Hitlerian diplomacy. Because it deals with the interplay of European relations and Austrian politics between 1936 and 1938 and represents the views of people close to the center of power, this narrative contains the most complete and truthful story of the subject now available. Mr. Fuchs inserts at every point facts and interpretations which have not appeared elsewhere but which seem entirely accurate and consistent. Since there is no way as yet of checking such "inside information," one can only accept it as looking authentic and as fitting into the general pattern of Austrian affairs. There are a few paragraphs, however, which must be labeled fiction, for Mr. Fuchs delights in reading the thoughts of Hitler, Mussolini, and other statesmen as they pace their respective rooms and plot the downfall of their enemies.

It becomes clear from this comprehensive narrative that Hitler had planned an expansion through both Austria and Czechoslovakia early in his regime, but had postponed action until he could be sure of Italian neutrality or assistance. The fatal event of this period turns out to be the application of sanctions against Italy during the Ethiopian affair, for by seeking to uphold the Covenant in Africa the British and French lost their ally in Central Europe. No previous book has shown so well the internal disintegration of Austria through Nazi intrigue and the hopelessness of Schuschnigg's position in the face of German pressure and Anglo-French hesitancy.

No Mere Power Fight

GOD'S VALLEY: People and Power along the Tennessee River. By Willson Whitman. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE FORT MILTON

EVER since Congress passed the Norris Act six years ago, the Tennessee Valley has been the happy hunting ground for several different sorts of folk: officials, engineers, and scientists setting up the Tennessee Valley Authority and seeking to get it functioning; college dons with accent and vocabulary strange to these Valley folk; private utility lawyers seeking injunctions against TVA; and writers looking for the material from which to write books about the Promised Land.

These authors in search of a subject have come here from France, England, Sweden, Russia, and from all over America. Most of the visitation and much of the writing has been to the good, for it is a seemly valley, even under the spotlight. At first many of the people of Valleyland found it hard to be put under the microscope as so many guinea pigs in the laboratory of social change. By now, however, they have gotten half-way used to it. Certainly they will consider Mrs. Whitman's book one of the fairest in purpose, and broadest in treatment, of those written about TVA.

Incidentally, the author did not write it after a lick and promise visit, but after a stay here of many weeks. She went all over the TVA area, from Hiwassee, in the Smokies, to Gilbertsville, at the river's mouth. She sought the broad setting of historical background, so as to understand the region and its people. The dire poverty resultant from the Civil War; the erosions of these eternal hills; the need for phosphate fertilizer to build up farms on the fringe of exhaustion; the great national value of an integrated region seeking to develop the latent resources, human and material—all these and a host of other things interested her and are reflected in her book.

Some of it, necessarily, is focused on the long power war. It was written before the negotiations between TVA and the heads of the private utilities had been successful. Today, from a power policy standpoint, there is peace in the Valley. This peace is based on purchase of private electrical property at a fair price, so that TVA can carry forward its great enterprise and at the same time legitimate private investors are not harmed.

This peace with honor should have the effect of correcting the misemphasis on power as the chief element in the Authority's work. Power is important, to be sure, but I believe the other elements substantially outweigh it: navigation, flood prevention, forest conservation, erosion control—such endeavors are of enormous value, and as years go on will procure more and more public attention.

It is in the attention given these plus values of TVA that "God's Valley" seems most consequential. Mrs. Whitman's treatment of them is interesting and persuasive. Her text has a number of errors of detail, and some misemphasis. The book as a whole, however, should help the nation understand that TVA is much more than a power fight: that it is a great national enterprise.

George Fort Milton, author of "The Age of Hate," is editor of The Chattanooga News.

This town's out-of-work miners helped build dams. (From "God's Valley.")

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The First World Dictator

THE HOLY TERROR. By H. G. Wells. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1939. $2.75.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

WELLS'S eschatological writings run all the way up and down the scale from the wild optimism of "In the Days of the Comet" to the equally wild, but at present more plausible, pessimism of "The War in the Air." But by now it is possible to regard them not as a series of apocalypses, but as one single apocalypse progressively revised on the Hegelian formula. Wells publishes a thesis; the facts of life presently lay down an antithesis; from the two, Wells evolves a synthesis which is his next version of the Latter Days, the starting point for the next argument; and so on.

From the jacket of "The Holy Terror"

The latest version differs from the rest in a concentration on means rather than ends, as is natural in a time when people are wondering, not what the Golden Age might be like, but how we are ever going to get it. Wells no longer hopes to get it through the magic influence of some regenerating comet, nor yet by the common agreement of men of good will as in "The World Set Free." To make a new world, says one of the characters of this novel, "the leader must be a fundamentally destructive man"; and another concludes that "civilized men can't clean up" because "the old order won't deal with reasonable men." There is considerable support for this gloomy view in current history (and ancient history, too, for Augustus had a bad reputation while he was working his way up). So now Wells envisions the world set free, more or less accidentally, by a Tough Guy, a Holy Terror whose dictatorship enforces the world unity and world peace that must come before pre-history will have ended and history can begin.

Nothing very novel about this, even though Wells uses a little sleight of hand at the finish to bring about the passing of the dictatorship and "withering away of the State," which the communists seem unable to manage. What gives "The Holy Terror" its novelty and its merit is the extraordinarily acute and convincing psychograph of Rud Whitlow, who became the first (and perhaps the last) world dictator. That Wells has borrowed what he needed from the character and history of Hitler is of no consequence, for the insight of the artist creates a better picture of the Dictator than any amount of autobiography or I-knew-him-when reminiscences—not merely Hitler (or Rud Whitlow), but any dictator, the *Führer an Sich.*

Rud Whitlow, ugly and feeble, who looked a little like Napoleon and a little like Donald Duck; so weak and timid, as a child, that he came to hate and fear all power in others with an intensity that could not relax till he had gathered all the power in the world into his own hands. In childhood, the family physician saw nothing unusual in him but "an excess of go and a lack of self-restraint," but there turned out to be a good deal more than that. There was in manhood the oratorical power that transcended any conscious reasoned intention; there were the interludes of scheming treachery born of fear; there were the moments of swift and lucid planning and execution; there were above all those occasional clairvoyant flashes of insight in which Rud Whitlow could sum up and short-cut all of an immensely tangled situation, so that his followers never had any doubt that he, and nobody else, was the Leader. And there was, incidentally, the "autosexuality" that concentrated all emotion on himself, because he was afraid of letting himself go, of giving himself, to any woman.

But how can Wells suppose that such a creature could bring on the Golden Age? Well—and here we deviate from modern though not from ancient history, where the group around Augustus was for a long time more respectable than he was—Rud Whitlow had attracted a group of men who saw a vision of a better, a truly civilized world; men in short who seem to have read and been profoundly influenced by the earlier works of H. G. Wells. Rud was destructive, the movement was constructive; behind him grew up a World Civil Service officered by "secret natural aristocrats"—the new Samurai, they used to be called. They needed the Tough Guy to clear away the jungle of outworn governments, institutions, creeds; but when he had integrated the world, and had begun to show the suspicious tyrannical cruelty that commonly follows on despotic power, they managed to get rid of him with singularly little fuss; and he found no successor.

It would be pleasant if a world dictator showed such good taste in picking his inner circle, and if he could be got rid of so easily when he had served his purpose. The forecast based on evidence at present available could hardly be so cheerful; but maybe it will be fair and warmer tomorrow.

Time Is Not Money

THE MIDAS TOUCH. By Margaret Kennedy. New York: Random House. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

KING MIDAS had the gift of turning everything he touched into gold; he also had the ears of a jackass. Is it possible to have the golden touch without the ass's ears? At first, in this novel of Miss Kennedy's, it almost seems so. Her hero, Evan Jones, is the charming cad who lives by his wits and his charm; he sees every one's weak point, and how it can be turned to gold for himself. But he has also the gift of enjoyment, which is the gift of detachment. Evan recognizes that his financial gift is a potential curse to him, like a craving for liquor in the blood; he has always prevented himself from staying too long in one place or accumulating too much; at the beginning of the book, he has still escaped the ass's ears.

Against him is set the figure of Corris Morgan, the great, unscrupulous, acquisitive financier; and how Evan is led to take part in his schemes, and so to sink from a vagabond adventurer to a respectable swindler, is one of the stories of the book. For there are a number of other narrative threads and characters. There is a shabby-genteel medium, who is for three-quarters of the time a fake, but who has flashes of genuine clairvoyance; and there is Lydia Jekyll, the wife of an impoverished country gentleman, who loses her standards bit by bit because she accustoms herself to sponging on the Morgans. These stories and others, woven together with the greatest skill, make the book one of the most successful diversions of the season.

However, it leaves the reader with an uneasy feeling that it was meant to be something more, and that it does not succeed in reaching that goal, or even in precisely defining it. It seems to be written on the theme of Money, which conditions all the characters. Miss Kennedy seems always on the point of saying something more significant than the statement that money is powerful, and never quite to get it said. Perhaps one should only say that Miss Kennedy has recognized Money, as being one of the two mysteries whose solution presses on us with peculiar heaviness (the other one is Time), and so adds a little in depth to what is essentially first-rate entertainment.

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Antidote for the Jitters

DEMOCRACY WORKS. By Arthur Garfield Hays. New York: Random House. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

ONE of the best established of our intellectual traditions is that writers on social and political problems should insist that things are going pretty badly with us. Mr. Max Lerner is merely one of the last of a long line to find that it is later than we think. Perhaps in our own day these prophets of doom are relatively so numerous as to constitute in themselves a symptom of something very wrong in the body politic. But the prophets of doom haven't quite a monopoly of the printed word. Mr. Arthur Garfield Hays, whose labors in defense of concrete civil rights have given him an experience of the actual workings of our institutions often denied to academic social scientists, has dared to commit himself to the assertion that "Democracy Works." Both from the Right and the Left, excited commentators are likely to call him a Pollyanna; but he has been called worse names in his long career, and to judge from this book, his sense of humor is strong enough to let him bear this last one with equanimity.

"Democracy Works" is an informal, at times almost random, discussion of contemporary problems we are all worrying about in press, class-room, pulpit, club, and smoking-room—technological unemployment, agriculture and industry, bureaucracy, propaganda, private and public finance, labor organization, and so on. In a too brief prologue which sets down an imaginary conversation among a friendly but diverse group gathered at a Long Island country house, Mr. Hays establishes the easy tone of the rest of his book. He writes fluently and unpretentiously, dodging technical terms even where he is dealing with economics. His position is rigorously in the center, which he calls, one hopes with some justification, "liberal." He defends no system, unless you regard our American democracy as a system. Notably the idea that in this country we are faced with a blank alternative between an abstraction called "Communism" and an abstraction called "Fascism" seems to him mischievous nonsense. Nor does he like better the simple antithesis between government and private business. Government, he notes, has in the last few generations done more and more things earlier governments did not do—set up the T. V. A., for instance, and imposed a graduated income tax. But he sees no reason why this process should not be accompanied in the future, as it has been in the recent past, by an expansion of private industry into new lines. The government might take over the railroads while the radio and electric companies developed the pioneer field of television.

Mr. Hays insists that we are not facing the unprecedented. He knows, and uses, his American history to good advantage to show that we have had numerous depressions, and that every depression was to those who underwent it—or at least to those who described it—the worst ever. In 1837 it was a honey, in 1857 a piperoo, in 1873 a lalapaloosa, in 1907, a sockdolager. History helps him to set the conflict between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. in admirable perspective. On almost every question he touches, his determination not to be carried off his feet by any idea, any program, no matter how attractive, bears fruit in sensible observations. He knows that this is far from the best of all

Nickolas Muray
Arthur Garfield Hays

possible worlds, but he also knows that it has never been a very pleasant place, certainly not as measured by what men have thought it ought to be. He wants very much to improve it, but modestly doubts whether he or anyone else knows how to do a complete job all at once.

This book should be an admirable antidote for the jitters which seem to have overcome so many of our more thoughtful people. It is not, and clearly Mr. Hays had no intention of trying to make it, a profound analysis of contemporary society. Even as a series of common-sense reflections on some current problems, however, it suffers from the neglect of one very obvious factor—population. Mr. Hays is, one hopes, quite right in assuming that for some time to come our irrational, unsystematic economy (it is certainly not "pure" capitalism) can continue to work. But if the experts on population are right, and we are faced with a stationary or slowly declining population by 1960, we are likely to be obliged to make major adjustments he does not clearly contemplate in this book.

Crane Brinton, associate professor of history at Harvard, is the author of "The Anatomy of Revolution" and "The Lives of Talleyrand."

Why Dictators Prefer Blonds

RACE AGAINST MAN. By Herbert J. Seligmann. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1939. $2.75.

Reviewed by JACQUES BARZUN

RACE is a subject about which it is difficult to enlighten others, and even oneself, for it is a mass of commonplaces, each with its well-dug groove in our thought and speech. Race, we say, is the difference between a Negro and a Japanese; or it is the "cause" of national and cultural traits; it is blood or shape of skull, or else simply the modern bunkum summed up in the fact that dictators prefer blonds.

Unfortunately it does little good to refute these commonplaces one by one. New ones—or old ones in new forms—spring up to replace them. They exemplify the habit of classifying human beings according to one criterion in order to judge of other and irrelevant characteristics. In the latest book on the subject, this fundamental difficulty is made abundantly clear.

Its author, Mr. Seligmann, after surveying the practical consequences of his subject, takes up the Nordic myth, the idea of heredity as fate, the findings of anthropology, the mixed origins of culture, the hybrid problem, and the position of the Negro, the Jew, and the alien in our midst. To establish his conclusions he has ransacked not only the storehouses of error and prejudice, rich in examples, but also the treasures of skeptical and scientific thought. He shows that none of the ways commonly used to "tell" a man's race leads to any valid information about him. You can measure his skull, trace his ancestry, put his hair or a drop of his blood under the microscope: when you have done, all you know merely enables you to class him with others who resemble him in that one respect. The groups thus formed tally with no other groupings completely or significantly. Fighting race prejudice in oneself, therefore, does not mean trying to forget that a Negro and a Japanese look different, but simply forgetting all the false and fantastic conclusions that we are wont to draw from that difference. Fighting the race prejudice of groups means, in addition, changing the economic or social conditions which foster the false association of cultural with physical traits.

Mr. Seligmann acknowledges help and advice received from Franz Boas in making his book, but one can judge from the wide range of the materials used, their adroit fitting together, and the steady march of the argument, that the author, independently of this august patronage, is complete master of his subject. Moreover, he writes with unaffected simplicity and force, so that the lay reader can follow without effort. "Race against Man"

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is a work of popularization in the best sense of the word; it is indeed a model of that difficult combination: breadth of knowledge and direct presentation.

While thus unhesitatingly recommending the book, I must add on a plane of "higher criticism" some slight objections of detail. First, why does Mr. Seligmann persist in making sport of Gobineau? He was a great writer, read by few in his own day or ours. His "Inequality of Races" is the least of his works, and it is, oddly enough, not aimed at what we now call racialism. His views on the subject are to his literary worth what Sir Thomas Browne's views on snake-bite are to his, so that if we go on damning Gobineau as a racialist, we shall only give ourselves the trouble of exhuming him again for his merits at a later date.

In the second place, I question whether it is quite consistent in Mr. Seligmann to explain racialism as an historical and cultural product, and at the same time to attack contemporary German racialists as if some personal deviltry lay behind their views. It seems to weaken the demonstration. And, lastly, I wonder whether in treating of hybrids and the "interracialism" of culture, Mr. Seligmann has sufficiently stressed the fact that he is combating, not a doctrine of race superiority or race purity, but just race.

Jacques Barzun is the author of "Race; a Study in Modern Superstition."

The Thunderer at Its Zenith

THE HISTORY OF THE TIMES. Vol. 2. The Tradition Established: 1841-1884. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. $5.

Reviewed by RICHARD ALDINGTON

IN accordance with "established tradition," this second volume of the history of *The Times* (London) by members of the staff is published anonymously. This strict discipline—the subjection of all its writers to the interests of the paper, this ban on any individual recognition—is only one of the reasons for its power over British public opinion in the last century, a power which to some extent it has regained during the past fifteen years. (It was *The Times* which led the attack on Edward VIII.)

The epoch, 1841-84, was that of the paper's greatest influence; and, towards the end, of its decline. It is a mistake to think that this influence existed because *The Times* was a Government journal. True, in those easy-going days it was possible for Delane, its editor, to be in close touch with Cabinet Ministers and to pick up important news from them in advance of other papers. But such was its power that Ministers rather courted *The Times* than *The Times* Ministers. Though Conservative and anti-democratic, it was far from being the servile mouthpiece of the Government. It never hesitated to attack Government policy and personalities or the Court. During one election it came out heartily for the Liberals. It was long a bitter enemy of Palmerston. The Queen and the Prince Consort hated it, like many of the aristocracy; and would have loved to see it curbed or suppressed.

The fact is that *The Times* owed its great success to purely journalistic virtues—its excellent news service (for those days) and the high conception which Delane and John Walter III (its proprietor) had of its functions. The public knew that no pains or expense were spared to get *accurate* news as quickly as possible, and also knew that Delane could not be intimidated or bribed out of publishing what he believed to be the truth. The exposures of British military incompetence and hospital scandals during the Crimean War were widely denounced as unpatriotic, as "helping the enemy," as a mortal blow to British prestige. Delane and Russell (his war correspondent) stuck to their guns, eventually proved they were right, and the Government was swept away by the blast of public anger they had aroused. And that is not the whole story. In practically every branch of news-gathering *The Times* was ahead of its rivals. Its commercial and financial news, for instance, was so complete and so reliable that every business man in the country had to read it. And it made some grand scoops. One of the most spectacular was printing the treaty of Berlin at the very moment it was being signed.

This privileged position did not and could not last. The abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers achieved its object of curbing *The Times* by opening the way to new and democratic papers which appealed to the masses, and soon beat *The Times* both in circulation and in efficiency. One of its worst blunders was its attitude towards the War between the States—a truly appalling display of British insularity and complacence. And its reporting of the Franco-Prussian War was just rotten. Nor is there any evidence in this history to show that *The Times* was even aware of the dreadful exploitation and conditions of the working class. It was always the newspaper of the well-to-do. But times were changing even though *The Times* didn't know it. With the illness and death of Delane and the appointment of Chenery the paper was living on its past prestige. The Thunderer was reduced to feeble crepitation. For revival it had to await another epoch and another editor.

Richard Aldington, well-known English novelist, poet, and critic, is now making his home in this country.

An English Eccentric

MADCAP'S PROGRESS. The Life of the Eccentric Regency Sportsman, John Mytton. By Richard Darwall. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1939. $4.50.

Reviewed by C. D. ABBOTT

MISS EDITH SITWELL, whose fancy for the grotesqueries of life has led her into many pleasant by-ways, first introduced John Mytton to a modern audience. She included him in her gallery of "English Eccentrics," where his strange and boisterous career is sketched with tantalizing brevity. A personage of such peculiar genius demands a more detailed presentation than the scope of Miss Sitwell's book would permit. Exquisite as her vignette is, it cries for amplification, and Mr. Darwall has answered the cry with this admirably complete biography, which not only retells all that "Nimrod," Mytton's close friend, first divulged in his breathless volume of 1837, but also incorporates into the narrative many hitherto uncollected episodes from the madcap's fantastic progress and a small collection of freshly discovered and very illuminating letters.

Engraving by Alken
John Mytton in a "Hell"

What Shakespeare was to poets, Raphael or Rubens to painters, Bach to composers, John Mytton was to sportsmen—a man of unpredictable and miraculous deeds. He was a genius of dare-deviltry. Who but he, clothed only in nightshirt, would have stalked wild fowl over the frozen pond? Who but he could have ridden a ferocious she-bear into the midst of a dinner party, and what matter if the exasperated beast did bury her teeth in his calf? But perhaps his crowning feat lay outside the realm of pure sport: he suffered from hiccups and, knowing that only fear could banish the ailment, he frightened them away by setting fire to his nightdress. His native Shropshire loved and feared him, and remembers still his achievements, legendary and real. We can thank Mr. Darwall's industry for the pleasure of meeting him vicariously.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Announcement

THE owners and editors of *The Saturday Review of Literature* are pleased to announce that with this issue the magazine passes under new directorship, and will henceforth be published by Joseph Hilton Smyth and Harrison Smith.

During the past year Joseph Hilton Smyth has acquired three other distinguished literary properties: *The Living Age, North American Review,* and *Current History.* Mr. Harrison Smith is an associate editor of these magazines, as well as a partner with Mr. Smyth in the firm of Harrison-Hilton Books, Inc.

The North American Review was founded in 1815 by William Tudor; *The Living Age* by E. Littell in 1844 as the continuation of Littell's "Museum of Foreign Literature"; *Current History* was founded by *The New York Times* during the world war. *The Saturday Review of Literature* will be the youngest of this distinguished group.

The same board of editors now on its masthead, with the exception of George Stevens who became associated with the magazine in 1933, has been with *The Saturday Review of Literature* since its first issue in 1924. Mr. Stevens will remain as editor, with the same editorial board as at present, and the same editorial policies will be continued.

Noble A. Cathcart has resigned as president and treasurer of the Saturday Review Company, Inc. After May 1 Mr. Cathcart will be with the Crowell Publishing Company, publishers of *Collier's, Woman's Home Companion, The American Magazine,* and *The Country Home Magazine.*

Slicks and Books

IT is undoubtedly a fact that most popular fiction is not literature. The ephemeral quality of the great majority of stories and novels written for the slick market is a familiar phenomenon, so familiar that we should think everybody would be tired of hearing about it. (In any case, it is hardly surprising, considering the ephemeral quality of most stories and novels written for the sake of art; but somehow this does not grieve the highbrows like writing for money.) However, what is more irritating is a corollary assumption, that what is popular cannot be much good.

A certain amount of irrelevant criticism, proceeding from this assumption, is being directed at J. P. Marquand's novel, "Wickford Point." Some reviewers seem to be bothered by the fact that a condensed version of "Wickford Point" ran in *The Saturday Evening Post.* In fact, there are two conflicting criticisms: one, that "Wickford Point" cannot amount to much, since part of it was a successful serial; the other, that "Wickford Point" is an important novel which was brutally maimed in the serial version.

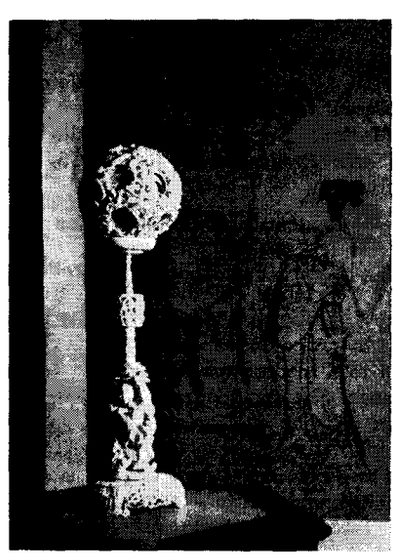
Thus we find Mr. T. S. Matthews (who regularly reviews books for *Time*) writing of "Wickford Point" in *The New Republic:*

> If you think you've already read this story in *The Saturday Evening Post,* you'd better take a look at the book. Those old *Post* editors are mighty scared of their readers. And they did a lot of cutting. The bowdlerized version of "Wickford Point" that *The Post* printed was 80,000 words shorter, and left out one of the principal characters because she was the hero's mistress. . . . That half [Mr. Marquand's] effort has been censored out of all knowledge, he has only himself to blame. For if he knows anything, he knows . . . the laws of the swineherd editors who feed the public trough.

Some of this, particularly the peroration, comes under the heading of hard words. It might be interesting to pursue the implications of a point of view which regards the popular reading public as pigs. Is this point of view consistent—for example—with a belief in political democracy? Can the public be trusted to behave intelligently as voters if they behave like pigs as readers? We can see nothing but confusion and disaster in the attempt to resolve this anomaly, and we return to the literary part of the discussion—specifically, to "Wickford Point."

We enjoyed "Wickford Point" immensely; we regard it as the most distinguished social satire to be produced in the United States since, anyway, "The Late George Apley." We do not, however, regard every word of it as inspired, and if we have any criticism—as indeed we have—it is that "Wickford Point" is too long. Having read it in book form, we see no sacrilege in the appearance of a condensed version—so long as the uncut version exists and is readily available. The fact that *The Saturday Evening Post* omitted the sections involving Patricia Leighton, the narrator's girl friend, does not seem to us to come under the head of censorship. When the Hays office cuts a movie, you cannot go to see the portion that was cut; but any *S.E.P.* reader is free to walk into the nearest library and read all about Patricia Leighton. Not that he has missed very much if he does not. For one thing, the scenes in which Patricia appears are moderate and decorous in flavor; for a more important thing, she is irrelevant to the main story.

The point we wish to make is that many novels are too long; that many novels would profit by intelligent editing. "Wickford Point" triumphs over its irrelevancies and its verbosities. But how many novels do not. There are too many of which we say, "This might be good if only it were shorter!" Editors in publishing houses constantly sweat blood over this very point; the work they have done in helping to make manuscripts manageable, readable, pointed, and significant will never be known. Of course they can make mistakes, but we have seldom if ever heard of a serious editorial mutilation in contemporary book publishing; and it is hardly conceivable that an editor could persuade the kind of author who knows what he is doing to cut a manuscript to its detriment. In any common-sense view, the elimination of padding, irrelevance, and occasional pointlessness is all to the good. Novels are not lyric poems.



The Chinese Sphere

By MARTHA BACON

I HAVE confused no issue now,
My pattern is full-wrought and clear,
Arched to precision of the bow,
Intricate as the Chinese sphere,

The seven orbs, starred, intertwined,
Separate and inseparable,
Are, as the many circled mind,
Cut to a curve irreparable.

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Letters to the Editor: *Qualifications of a Literary Historian*

Literary Scholarship

SIR:—May I take issue with Mr. Howard Mumford Jones on some points in his article, "What Is the Matter with Literary Scholarship?" When he informs us "that no American scholar or pair of American scholars is apparently capable of producing a work so lucid and sound as the 'History of English Literature' by the French savants Legouis and Cazamian," he is certainly unflattering to American literary historians. The Legouis and Cazamian history is a third-rate book full of rambling comment and pointless criticism; it is inferior to at least two of the books in the same Hachette series, Lanson's "History of French Literature" and Bossert's "History of German Literature." Besides, like most histories of this type, it is largely a compilation from other histories. In any case, it is high time that the more modern ways of writing literary history were tried on both English and American literature.

As for Mr. Jones's illusion, expressed in the sentence quoted from, that it is scholars on whom it is incumbent to write literary history, let me say that literary history is written by literary historians who are not only scholars in literature, but who are acquainted with the newest historical methods and ideas and who are writers to boot. A talent for writing history, literary or any other sort, is not common. Mr. Jones goes on further, "the scholar needs to write fewer articles for the learned; he needs to plan out and write more books for the use of the cultivated but unprofessional reader." Unless the scholar is a writer he should be induced to stop writing, for what he produces is only a drug in the market. Literary scholars, according to Mr. Jones, have been "too proud to popularize." What is the matter with so many scholars or quasi-scholars is that they have no talent for writing, and having no talent for writing themselves, they are inclined to underrate it in others, and have a conviction that nobody who writes well and entertainingly can possibly be a scholar. The absence of power to interpret facts, the mania for facts in the raw, the lack of literary flair, critical acumen, artistic intuition, an ignorance of how literature is made, are the main drawbacks of the common run of so-called literary scholarship. In another part of the same article Mr. Jones says, "Literary criticism is a matter of appraisal which may or may not involve scholarly knowledge." There is no such thing as genuine literary criticism separated from scholarly knowledge. The literary critic is an expert in literature. What is the matter with so many of the "scholars" is that they really do not understand literature.

In conclusion let me say that Mr. Jones seems to be confusing scholarship with information. Commenting on Professor Allan Nevins's statement, "The most execrable specimens of literary criticism in print can be found in the *Journal of the Modern Language Association*," he says, "More careful scholarship would not have introduced this publication by a title which it does not bear." Information that could be acquired through a telephone book is surely distinct from scholarship.

MARY M. COLUM.

New York City.

"Emily Post? Isn't she the lady who turned pro?"

"My Cousin Mark Twain"

SIR:—In answer to Mr. Bernard DeVoto's review of "My Cousin Mark Twain" in your issue for March 11th, let me state:

The John Smith introduction is so well known that it would have been an insult to the reader's intelligence to state it was by Mark Twain. That is self-evident.

The Booth Tarkington introduction was sent as a tribute to Mark Twain by Mr. Tarkington himself in *typewritten* form. He gave me permission to use it, and when the proof-sheets were submitted to him, he himself dated it "November 10th, 1938." For some reason or other the reviewer objects to this date. I have never seen the Limited Edition of Huck Finn. I feel that such editions are only for the rich, and I am a struggling author.

The reviewer states there is no documentary evidence. This shows Mr. DeVoto has at least one thing in common with Sydney Smith who said that a reviewer should never read a book before reviewing it, "it prejudices a man so."

I quote directly from Becky Thatcher (Laura Hawkins), Bill Gillis, the Connecticut Yankee (James Marvin), my father James R. Clemens, Rudyard Kipling—all of whom gave me first-hand information. In the chapter, "Reporting of Mark Twain's First Lecture," I give the names of the following papers with the *exact date* of the articles which I found myself (the first to find) and use in the book, *The Evening Bulletin, The Daily Alta California, The San Francisco Chronicle, The San Francisco Examiner, The Golden Era,* and *the Weekly Examiner.* When I describe the illustrating of "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," I write what Dan Beard the illustrator *himself told me.* If all this is not documentary evidence, the phrase means something different West of the Mississippi than it does at Harvard.

Of course the facts in my book are the same as in Mr. Paine's. Let us hope that Laura Hawkins, Bill Gillis, James Marvin told the same facts to Mr. Paine as they did to me. In writing his book on Mark Twain the reviewer was evidently either too shy or too indifferent or too lazy to look up these people and interview them. He blindly took his facts *from Paine.* I did not. Just to give one example. Paine states categorically that the original Mark Twain, old Isaiah Sellers, died in January, 1863, and that his death was the cause of Clemens's adopting the name. I state on page forty that Sellers did not die until March 6, 1864. And so on.

As a reviewer Mr. DeVoto has a perfect right to say the book is "dull" and "I could learn to live without it." But misstatements of fact must be corrected.

CYRIL CLEMENS.

Webster Groves, Mo.

Proofreading

SIR:—As a lover of English I appeal for an educational effort in behalf of the new generation of proofreaders—an effort to do what the old, forgotten spelling bee to some degree did. Not merely in the detective stories are the errors, but in books of importance, as "The Miracle of England," in which one reads of Deaumont and Fletcher, of James III of England, and other errors which the author could not have made. Sabatini's "Sword of Islam," p. 345, tells of the "turban which swathed his cap," and a few lines further a hero "cut a bloody swathe in their ranks." A swath is what a scythe cuts nothing else but, and a swathe is something else again.

JOHN COX, JR.

New York City.

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The Perfection Box

BY G. B. STERN

Sarah Orne Jewett

WITH a divine sense of geographical irrelevance, we had been reading George Moore's "Conversations in Ebury Street" up at our little Hebridean Hotel during Christmas; and it must have been because of this, that our own conversation swerved into a literary argument. Not, as far as George Moore is concerned, that he could ever serve as a model for any conversation or argument on the give-and-take, fifty-fifty basis; there are two lines in the early part of "Conversations in Ebury Street" at which I never cease marveling:

> After a pause during which Mr. Husband was kind enough to wait for me to collect my thoughts, I said . . .

Mr. Husband, when he goes to heaven, will not be awarded a further halo; he has one already for conspicuous chivalry towards one not in need of it.

We found ourselves at the eternally interesting question of who were the giants in literature of the last fifty years or so. Does George Moore qualify as a giant? Does egoism disqualify an author from gianthood? and which little Jack among us shall dare to run him through with our little sword?

On the other hand, should he not instead go into the Perfection Box?

The Perfection Box explains itself in the title. We have only recently acquired it, and nothing could be more convenient when, metaphorically, one is having a thorough clean-up among writers. It is like suddenly being presented with a shoe-suitcase to add to your luggage, where before you had only an ordinary suitcase, and the shoes were crammed in haphazard with the rest of your things.

Who, then, goes into this shining neatly lined receptacle? The first answer provides the greatest problem: Jane Austen? Of course; usher her into the Perfection Box; who so worthy?

But then cries of angry dissent: "Jane Austen should go among the giants!" For why should the giants have all those loose lumbering rugged characteristics which appertain to mere size? Why should they stride about and be craggy?

Tolstoy, we are aware without argument, can be put on the giant heap; and we can pile up with Dostoievsky and Balzac, Dickens and Thackeray, Zola (Yes. No. Yes. No. *Yes*), Hardy, Meredith (more wrangling at this point: "No, *no*. Yes."), Walt Whitman, Yeats, Shaw, Wells. A dog-fight over Bennett: Remember "The Old Wives' Tale"? And the usual question: Is one great epic novel enough? If it is, that at once gathers in Emily Brontë, and throws out Charlotte. And so back to Jane Austen.

One side hotly contests that "giant" can only be defined in the sense of "genius." Try to eliminate the Rabelaisian association. In that case, the other side replies, we need not require a Perfection Box at all.

"But my dear man—" (or my-dear-woman) "—if you can perceive no more intelligent distinction than what divides big bearded men with leonine untidy manes of hair, from small ladies with shapely delicate wit—"

The ensuing clamor then proved how sadly we fail to come up to the standards of Mr. Husband.

A curious point of view was put forward, that when an author's work shows passion, he or she gets automatically registered in the giant class. "Jane Austen," remarked a certain critic, making the most colossal misstatement of his career, "Jane Austen has no passion to give us. Perfection, yes; passion, no."

No passion? But perhaps this superficially judging person has never read "Sense and Sensibility"; has forgotten Marianne's agony when Willoughby was false to her? Within its own formula of exquisitely plaited technique, it trembles with the very passion of King Lear disappointed of his daughters.

Jane Austen really is the only writer who can leave us with the ultimate satisfaction of knowing that she belongs fully and triumphantly to both the Giants and the Box. Yet if, forsaking the giants, she ultimately went into the Perfection Box, obviously she would fill up too much of the space; practically all the space there is; for who could we slip in round the sides?

Stevenson? A lull in dispute while it was affectionately settled that he is not quite great enough to join the giants on their mountain-peak (and who would have known it better than he?) and that to reckon him as Perfection was an invitation to the Wrong Box. He belongs to that amiable cluster of writers whom we love a little better than their works.

Max Beerbohm. Lewis Carroll. Marcel Proust. Kenneth Grahame. There we start with the right type of applicant. None of them bestrides the narrow earth like a colossus, yet genius cannot be denied. Here are more to join them: Saki and P. G. Wodehouse, Neil Lyons and perhaps Stella Benson. I anticipate argument over Stella Benson. E. M. Forster; Sylvia Townsend Warner; Evelyn Waugh. Argument becomes impolite and a little hysterical. Somebody interrupts with a lusty bellow demanding that Chesterton be thrust among the giants. And someone else says Kipling. And someone else says that Kipling only excelled at short stories, which means the Perfection Box for him and (casually) for Chekhov. "But Chekhov was a *giant!*" And we are back again where we were, with another half-hour sped away and nothing settled. But the interlude has given us a new basis on which to build the following definition: that a man can count as a giant if only *enough* of his work is in that class and on that scale. But to go into the Perfection Box, all he creates must be equally good; you may not win a way into the Perfection Box, leaving a scatter of unworthy performance behind you on the

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floor; the whole of your output must tuck in together.

Take Max. Has he ever written one line which is not as witty and immaculate and fastidious and elegantly dandified as his every other line? Perfection and more perfection and yet again perfection and even now perfection. But most critics, talking of "War and Peace," will insist on the terrific, the overwhelming conception of the first half, saying: "The rest isn't as good."

Or Kenneth Grahame: "The Wind in the Willows"; "The Golden Age"; "Dream Days"; a short story in the Yellow Book: "The Headswoman." No more, and not a speck or flaw on any of them.

And P. G. Wodehouse. With all our swaggering broadmindedness, it would look pretty silly to have him striding from mountain peak to mountain peak between Dostoievsky and Hardy. But he, too, is among that little immortal group who walk so lightly and with such ease that they never seem to lurch off the chalk-line. Some of us may prefer Bertie Wooster to Psmith; a large congregation shouts for Jeeves; and there are even those, though I am not among them, who have a weakness for Ukridge. But I believe I have never yet heard anyone say: "This time it isn't a good Wodehouse."

We are, I must once again confess it, a little inclined to be influenced by physical appearance when separating the giants from their smaller but more perfect species; and our reluctance to call Jane Austen a giant can be matched by a strong feeling that if Browning for instance, or Tennyson or Carlyle, those three picturesque musketeers, dark and hairy, tobacco-stained and broad-shouldered, their cloaks stormily flung about them, had happened to be master-craftsmen in the cobweb style, spinning their gleaming threads into a dapper pattern, we would still feel they were a trifle too disorderly and a bit too much of an outsize for the Perfection Box; whereas Barrie, physically of elfin size and neatness, we might easily beckon to step inside without an unbiassed examination as to whether perhaps he may not after all belong to the giants.

Caricature by Bohan Lynch

Max Beerbohm: "Perfection and more perfection and yet again perfection" . . .

No, I think not. There are boundaries to what he can achieve; and even a five-mile limit is enough to send you off the mountains and into the box. Within his self-imposed radius, he has a twinkling consistency and a chuckling success. Certainly we could point out, say one page in "Mary Rose," half a page in "Dear Brutus," a bitter moment or two in "The Will," which could flash him at once out of the Box and into the Giant group. But by far the greater part of his achievement renders him supremely eligible to dart through that invisible aperture . . . which has a deplorable tendency every moment to become more and more like a little arched doorway, rose-entwined, into the House We Built for Wendy, and less and less like the self-respecting shoe-suitcase which it was before we began to mention Barrie.

It is clear that a short period of astringency is indicated; and so let me recommend the inclusion of Sarah Orne Jewett and Logan Pearsall Smith: a very perfect couple for the Perfection Box. Sarah Orne Jewett, in case this may be your first introduction, might well be called the New England Mrs. Gaskell; except that her true stories of life in the state of Maine between (roughly) 1860 and 1900 give out a pungent salty tang which is more to my own taste than the lavender of "Cranford." Her observation of the samples and simples of human nature directly surrounding her, is caustic and honest and humorous; and of the actual writing of these essays and sketches collected into two volumes called "The Country of the Pointed Firs" and "The Only Rose," one can say in that rather puzzled voice which we have sometimes heard in praise of this or that person: "I don't know what it *is:* they're not exactly handsome and not a bit smart, but they have such *style!* I expect it's the way they carry themselves." I am enamored, there is no doubt, of the way in which Sarah Orne Jewett carries herself. Let her, therefore, carry herself right into the Perfection Box.

Her escort, Logan Pearsall Smith (we have not quite shaken off the temptation to be slightly Barrie-ish in the way we assemble this company) might well, were it not for Max, be King of the Perfection Box. Were it not for Max and Walter de la Mare, that fine filigree watchmaker among writers.

And should we decide to elect none of these three because they are equally flawless, it is a thrilling if eccentric discovery that the crown might go, after due consideration, to Walt Disney. Anyone who objects that he is a producer of films and not an author, will be met by the reminder that he creates characters where no characters were before; whereas many so-called authors have done less, few could be said to have done more.

Well Written Melodrama

SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN. By John Sanford. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $2.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

FALLING immediately into the category of the hard-boiled novel, using verbiage as raw but as natural as the speech of ordinary Americans of the soil, Mr. Sanford's work is further distinguished by a genuinely poetic gift for descriptive language. In fact, in the latter part of the book he breaks into actual free verse, to explain Tom Paulhan's desire to be cut off from "the long tradition of trespass."

Paulhan is a foot-loose man who turns up exhausted and babbling of his past, and of a certain dancer in a "cheap joint," to sleep in the barn of Aaron Platt, where, at the frosty-morning opening of the story, Aaron disgustedly finds him. Paulhan is involved with Aaron's own past, which at once begins to unfold through various narrative devices, one being the testimony of Aaron at a future coroner's hearing, which the reader gradually comes to see approaching because Aaron, in deep resentment and anger, will leave Paulhan to die of hunger on his property. The plot turns on the legal question as to whether a man may be indicted for murder for so leaving another to die; but the real story lies in Platt's background, involving the tyranny of his father—a monstrous bully—and Paulhan's background, involving Grace Tennent, the girl he marries. Aaron has had a terribly hard time all his life while Tom has been a congenital rolling stone. The story begins with the final clash between the two men and weaves backward to explain the reasons. This explanation draws in subordinate characters; Rose, of the summer camp, who had designs on Tom; that remarkable character, the "Widder" of the community; and various local men.

The structure, you will perceive, has its points of originality; and even when the detail seems somewhat extraneous, such is the vividness of Mr. Sanford's writing that it is never uninteresting. But the plot is rather too neat. One feels in general that the author is too fond of artifice at times. And the danger of "fine writing" is not always resisted.

In spite of all this, and even though matters concerning prophylaxis become rather intrusive (for which a free burlesque of the Song of Solomon does not exactly compensate), the story electrifyingly leaps along and is eminently readable. Here is a younger writer of undeniable talent, the most promising feature of whose work is a sometimes superb originality of language. The tough-guy talk, a number of other young writers can do as well as he. This is his third or fourth book, but he still may, very possibly, "go places."

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The Black Death

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A GERMAN REBEL. By Toni Sender. New York: The Vanguard Press. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by VERA MICHELES DEAN

AS the tide of anti-liberalism rolls on unchecked throughout the world, people in relatively sheltered areas like the United States feverishly strive to detect the causes of what many regard as a twentieth-century Black Plague. Why did German democracy, which bravely raised its head with the Weimar Republic, fail to survive the frosty post-war years? Why did German liberals and socialists fail to resist Nazism in its early stages? Did Hitler's opponents lack courage and intelligence—or were they betrayed, abroad, by Allied intransigence, and at home by the "fifth column" of unredeemed reactionaries, who had never paid anything but lip-service to the republic?

Valuable answers to many of these questions are provided by Toni Sender, who in her early youth joined the trade union movement, took an active part in the revolution of November 1918, and for thirteen years served as an Independent Social Democratic deputy in the Reichstag, until she was forced to leave Germany in 1933. Mrs. Sender's autobiography is the unadorned story of a woman whose abilities would have assured her a successful and lucrative business career if she had not felt impelled to devote her life to political and trade union activities, not merely in the rank and file, but as a front-line fighter. While some readers may find her frequent references to her feminine youthfulness and slight build rather cloying, few will remain indifferent to her courageous struggle, which called for both moral and physical endurance.

What is most impressive about Mrs. Sender is her common-sense appraisal of the events in which she participated. During the World War, when the majority Socialist group in the Reichstag—which had voted for war credits—tried to prevent the anti-war minority from expressing its views in public, she realized that "even in the German labor movement the genuine spirit of democracy was still unknown—it was understood only as the right of the majority to carry through its decision." Discussing the French occupation of the Ruhr—when the French claimed that Germany, by falling behind on deliveries of coal and telephone poles, had failed to carry out its reparations obligations—she points out that "in 1923 the French did everything to create for themselves the terrible menace of 1939." From the start, Mrs. Sender had no illusions about the destructive part played by German communists, who first undermined social democracy on the ground that it was betraying the proletariat, and then joined the Nazis in deriding it. Nor was she blind to the reasons why the Nazis succeeded where the republicans failed. "It was my conviction," she says, writing of 1931, "that, although the Nazis were a swamp plant, product of the economic crisis, it was not sufficient to combat them with police and negative measures. We had to prove to the electorate that there was a way out of the depression and despair, and indicate that way."

Procrastination, and splits within the groups which supported the republic, prevented elaboration of the constructive program she advocated. The Nazis proved more swift and more determined than their opponents. And in her penetrating post-mortem of the republic, Mrs. Sender adds: "The republic, although it created a great number of outstanding services, rights, and achievements, not only did not understand how to make the people conscious of these creations, but was too prosaic, dreary, and rational; it did not arouse the necessary enthusiasm for the new rights and the newly gained democracy." For the older democracy of the United States, where denunciation of fascism is too often mistaken for constructive action, Mrs. Sender's confession of faith is both a warning and a challenge.

Vera Micheles Dean is editor of the Foreign Policy Association.

From Juliet to St. Joan

I WANTED TO BE AN ACTRESS. By Katharine Cornell, as told to Ruth Woodbury Sedgwick. New York: Random House. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

MISS CORNELL had theater in her family and in her bones; she wanted to be an actress and so, after a time, she was, and an extraordinarily fine one. It seems very simple in outline; it seems hardly more complicated in this straightforward narrative of things that happened from the time she got her first press notice from a little boy in Coburg, Ontario, until these very days, when adjectives flutter around her on all occasions and a season seems flat without her presence.

Miss Cornell as St. Joan

Her first notice appeared in Volume 1, Number 1 of the *Coburg Sun,* which was probably a fine paper even if it was written in pencil. The caption was, in its fashion, magnificent: "Acting Is Hard." The play, however, was described succinctly as "A-1" by the editor, who possibly was prejudiced in its favor. After all, if a co-author doesn't approve, who will? Miss Cornell helped write the play and they made twenty cents. The headline seems to be in the nature of an editorial moan: the editor played the part of the Duke. There is nothing to indicate that acting was hard for Miss Cornell, even then; little in the book to indicate that the way to eminence has been difficult for her. She worked hard at things she loved doing, and to which everything in her mind and body and heart committed her, and reading her crisp account one would be willing to bet that it was all great fun.

It is more narrative than explanation, this book with which Mrs. Sedgwick has assisted her and which has wisely, one suspects, been left very largely in Miss Cornell's words. Mrs. Sedgwick has some pretty flutters in her preface, but the book goes to the point with little lingering. It tells the story, I am inclined to think, rather too barely; one wishes there were more—more of background, more of what Miss Cornell herself felt about all of the things she has done and about the art she so magnificently practises. But such a book takes more time than can be spared for writing by a person whose devotion lies elsewhere.

At its barest it is the record of a fine career in the theater. Most of us can fill in from our own memories—glimpse Miss Cornell's Juliet of the outstretched arms, her grave and tender Candida, the shining tranquillity of her Elizabeth Barrett. Echoes in the book of that grand tour of hers and of the historic performance in Seattle will make people whose devotion is also to the theater proud all over again. There will be time enough for her to write her real autobiography when she is no longer vividly living it; the past grows dim as Miss Cornell rehearses for the future.

"I Wanted to Be an Actress" is little more than an interim book; a recapitulation to date. It is the jottings for a book one day to be written. It is interesting and pleasant, but even now Miss Cornell is approaching in another play. Lay the book down. The reality is waiting.

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Elliott & Fry

Myrtle Johnson

The Fenian Revolt

THE RISING. By Myrtle Johnston. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by DONAGH MACDONAGH

MISS JOHNSTON'S novel of the Fenian Rising of '67 is a swift-moving, well-written account which must appeal to the novel reader rather than the historian; which is as it should be. She has taken a small subsection of the rebellion and symbolized through it the whole pitiable, heroic failure, has given us characters who in their life and their vitality are typical of the revolutionaries who have made every Irish Rebellion possible.

In the romantically named Wolfe Darragh we have a character who is not perhaps one of the great figures of fiction, but who strides through the book bringing encouragement and hope to his downtrodden followers, and a breath of American freedom, for he is a member of the Fenian Brotherhood which fought in the Federal army.

He it is who is given the task of making soldiers out of the enthusiastic but individualistic inhabitants of the village of Ballygowlan and the neighboring countryside, no easy matter since practically the only weapons available are pikes and hay-forks. His training of the men, their constant danger from informers, his personal reactions, and finally his heroic death charging the English cannon with pikes as the only arms, are the theme of the book. And there is a love story thrown in for good measure.

Miss Johnston is to be congratulated on her triumph over her material. For a novelist writing of the middle of the nineteenth century for an American audience, the temptation must be almost insuperable to use the Faix and Beggoragh type of dialogue, but in "The Rising" there is scarcely one solecism of this kind, and I cannot recall having encountered even one pig in the kitchen.

New England Dilemma

DOWN-EAST DUCHESS. By Ruth Blodgett. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by J. P. MARQUAND

RUTH BLODGETT has written a story of contemporary New England which is distinctly refreshing, because she has not delved too studiously into ancient traditions and neuroses. Instead she has concerned herself with character types that live in any New England manufacturing town.

The scene of "Down-East Duchess" is the city of Peaceport, formerly a shipping town but now with mills along the waterfront. It might be one of several Massachusetts cities, but since some of the characters are able to dine in Gloucester it is logical to identify Peaceport with Salem, where mills began to spring up along the harbor as soon as shipping failed. The pallid snobbery of the old aristocracy is briefly sketched in as a background, and Peaceport presents the social dilemma of any town along the New England coast. In front of a stately curtain of the past is the modern spectacle of jerry-built, three-decker apartments for more cheap labor to work the mills expanding in the period of post-war prosperity.

This all gives a fine setting for a story. Miss Blodgett has made skillful use of it in creating a mill-owning family, the Beggs. The two Beggs brothers have come from Rhode Island and have started a prosperous woolen mill. Joe has married Mary Parsons, of old Peaceport stock and has become part of the social life, in spite of his simple homespun ways. His brother Ben, who is able to handle labor and who is really the brains of the combination, marries in his middle forties his blonde stenographer, an emigré from the Moosehead region in Maine—a generous, natural, and vital girl, some twenty years his junior. Just when it seems that Ben might assert himself, he dies in France, and the blonde, pleasure-loving Adele marries the Duc de Pontignac. Her half brilliant, half tawdry career, and the commercial difficulties of the Beggs family from the world war to the present, take up the rest of the book.

It seems somewhat of a pity that this foreign and not entirely convincing history of a parvenu duchess should have been injected into the story of Peaceport, because there was enough of a story without it. The characters, however, are well, if superficially, drawn and the novel moves in a series of quick scenes, sometimes a trifle hard to connect with each other because of the rapid shifts. The characters are pleasant and the book is good reading for anyone who knows New England and who appreciates the difficulties of its industrial life.

Portrait of a Family

THE KING PIN. By Helen Finnegan Wilson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by ARNOLD MULDER

A NOTE in the front of this novel imparts the now familiar information that "no reference is made or intended to any actual person." Yet I know an "actual" family of which the rowdy, noisy, booming, kind-hearted, selfish-generous Carl Braun clan could be a portrait; and so probably does every other reader.

Which is the justest praise that can be given. For although the novel contains an occasional scene that does not carry conviction, and the author sometimes stacks her cards to score her point, she has succeeded in making an interesting family come to life, and without sentimentality; the tone of half-malicious, half-appreciative irony is maintained throughout. The novel is an honestly objective portrait of an American family group which will win instant recognition from many readers.

Carl Braun, the "king pin," is a big, noisy, essentially kindly, but outwardly domineering lumber salesman and general "man of affairs," in upper Michigan. He never merely "says" anything, he always "roars" or "booms" or "shouts." The members of his family are just as noisy; they shout and roar and bluster; they fight among themselves, but display an intense clan loyalty. They live in the clouds of unrealistic hopes of the next business deal of the "king pin," which is always going to make them a million dollars—even on the last page.

When Carl Braun tries to convert his daughter's young husband into another piece on his business chess board, rebellion develops, and such drama as the book contains is connected with this issue. For the most part, however, it is a portrait of a family; the interest lies in the episodes rather than in the main thread of story. And the family group is painted with deftness of touch and sureness of coloring.

"The King Pin" received the highest award in the Avery and Jule Hopwood Awards contest in fiction at the University of Michigan in 1938.

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Democracies under Pressure

WAR IN OUR TIME. Edited by Hans Speier and Alfred Kähler. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by HARRY D. GIDEONSE

MODERN war—total war—is still discussed by pacifists and patriots alike in terms of past experience. In democratic countries we still think and act on the assumption that we can determine our own policies in neutrality and in war as we see fit, quite apart from anything that may take place elsewhere.

The distinguished group of scholars that make up the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research has pooled its resources in this volume to examine these traditional assumptions. The central theme is the pattern of interaction through which—in a variety of ways—the mere fact that totalitarian governments exist, determines the course that non-totalitarian nations can take.

The red thread running through a series of chapters by Lehmann, Colm, Lederer, and Kähler is the recurring impact of an armament economy. Germany is the most extreme example of a country in which dictatorial government has strained every resource to prepare for war. The dictators know that their countries cannot stand the strain of a prolonged conflict, everything is therefore risked on the chance of a swift lightning-like stroke at the enemy. The very nature of these preparations tends to determine the character of defense elsewhere—and dictates an almost identical policy of offsetting expenditure, centralization, and discipline. In 1937 military expenditures consumed twenty per cent of the national production of Soviet Russia, approximately fifteen per cent in Germany, more than ten per cent in Japan, about ten per cent in France, five per cent in England, and only one and four-tenths per cent in the United States. Every newspaper reader knows that the general trend has continued upward and that the democracies are "catching up." The figures for the early 40's are clearly forecast by the present drift.

How long can the democracies remain "democratic" under such pressure? An increase in armament calls for increased production without increased consumption—or if production does not increase, it calls for decreased consumption. It will mean continuous pressure on wages and other costs. It will require relaxation of social legislation or convention such as that which limits the hours of work. Can such objectives be democratically achieved? If not, what remains of the validity of the argument that we must avoid a vigorous foreign policy in defense of our own conceptions and interests, because nothing would more certainly overthrow democratic institutions than war itself? Is not a decade of competitive preparation of this type even more likely to undermine free institutions than an immediate conflict which might easily be less disturbing than a prolonged period of slow but certain deterioration?

While the direction of political change might still be subject to argument, our military and economic life is fatally destined to follow the pattern set by the totalitarian governments. Democracies are not free to choose limited war of the traditional pattern, if their adversaries wage a total war. The private life of democratic nations, the educational conceptions, standards of living, social legislation, and the methods and content of our thought are inescapably dependent upon the political ideology of our neighbors. Staudinger's chapter on population stresses this with dramatic clarity. What *they* choose to do, determines what *we* can afford to do. A projection into the future of current population trends in Germany relative to similar figures for democratic countries, will make voluntary limitation of numbers in the democratic countries as dangerous a luxury as complete disarmament. Staudinger even envisages the desirability of opening American gates to a new flow of European emigration.

"War in Our Time" is indispensable reading for anyone interested in the drift of public policy both domestically and internationally during the coming decade. While most of the work is of high quality, individual contributions are, of course, uneven. The opening chapter on power politics and peace plans by Hans Simons is irritatingly vague, and full of judgments that define error without revealing the yardstick of truth that was used in the process. Perhaps it is unfair to expect too much from an author who took Munich seriously and rejoiced in the failure of "undemocratic" collective security which set the world "free for a much more valuable effort, that of developing peaceful methods of change rather than coercive means of maintaining vested interests." The new refugees from Prague are a human testimonial to the "peaceful" character of the method of change that now prevails.

This collective effort at diagnosis leaves little hope for those who still believe in disarmament as a possible international solution. If all parties were democratic in values, such a possibility would still remain. To the fascist states, however, not only is armament normal but without the emotional drives associated with military preparation, the entire economic, social, and moral program of the totalitarian countries collapses.

The chapter on natural resources by Karl Brandt is as cryptic a blast at current economic mythology as can be found in print. The raw material "problem" cannot be solved permanently by shifting sovereignty or by building self-contained groups. Lasting solutions along this line are impossible because the significance of a raw material shifts with cultural and technical change. The most effective protection against public or private monopolies is still the maintenance of a free market and the encouragement of human resourcefulness, in other words scientific research.

Ascoli leaves a ray of hope in his final chapter by suggesting that fascism—and its repercussions elsewhere—may prove to be an equivalent or a substitute for war. Aggressive means, however, are hardly likely to lead to conciliatory ends.

Harry D. Gideonse is professor of Economics at Barnard College.

Tennessee Funeral

DOSSIE BELL IS DEAD. By Jack Boone. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by LEIGHTON BARRET

TO stir his West Tennessee hillmen out of their "utter leisureliness," Mr. Boone has provided situations as strong as raw corn liquor. He has overdone it, by any standard which holds in the flat lands. But if he has written a rampageous, double-barrel melodrama, he has also admirably recorded an authentic pattern of backwoods folkways.

Through sheer good, forceful writing, and technical deftness, Jack Boone twists two distinct stories together until they read as one. For grim comedy, there is Luster Holder's impatience to replace his woman, Dossie Bell, whose death and burial serve as a framework for the book. The other story, of Squire Kiler's unsuccessful attempt to arrange a shotgun wedding for his daughter, Birdie, tops the first in sensationalism. Birdie is a strumpet who wants "life and a hellacious lot of it."

The author does not make us understand these people who do not understand themselves, but he writes of them with a fine perception of sight and sound and muscular feeling. Best of all is the pungency of phrase with which he sets tongues clacking in the hills. Dossie Bell lies "as cold as pond ice," Birdie traipses off to pinching parties "not wearin' enough clothes to wad no shotgun," and the Squire's liquorish breath "smells like fresh-corded wood."

Mr. Boone has written a strongly flavored book, which makes good the literary claim he staked out in his short stories. He likes those outrageous cusses who gossip and cavort at Dossie Bell's funeral and we like the way he writes about them.

Leighton Barret is the author of "Though Young," a novel about Southern childhood.

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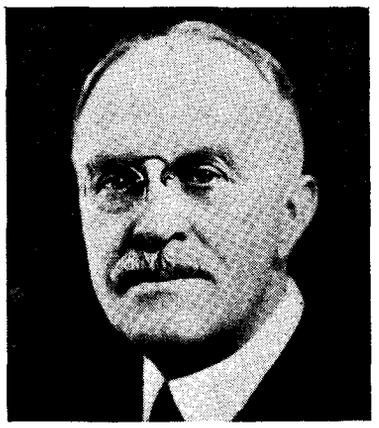
Not since "Lincoln Steffen's Autobiography" has an American journalist's life story had so vital a message for America



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"The Mood Is All"

AN UNFINISHED LIFE. By Ruth St. Denis. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1939. $3.75.

Reviewed by JOHN ANDERSON

WITH the usual troubles of a Puritan conscience Ruth St. Denis combined in her career a peculiarly rigorous embodiment of a "stage mamma" and a fame, connected in the public mind at least, with "bare belly" dancing. These disparate forces, coupled with the fact that her expression in art was entirely personal and untraditional, give this record of her life a quality that can be classified, I think, only in the Department of Utter Confusion.

On its surface facts her career would seem to justify an autobiography. As a lanky farm girl born Ruthie Dennis, she came from Somerville, New Jersey, with her mother to New York, danced for the man in the box office at Worth's Museum, and got a job. Thereafter she won a prize in a six-day bicycle race, appeared in Belasco productions, notably with Mrs. Carter in "Zaza," felt the urge to some creative expression of her own, and from an advertisement of Egyptian Deities cigarettes evolved a method which was to win her fame first in Europe, then in her native country, and finally in the Orient, from which most of her material was derived at second hand, through the calm assumption, as she puts it, "that the mood to me is all."

Her numerous tours, often in vaudeville in this country, her marriage to Ted Shawn, the foundling of the Denishawn school, and the collapse of that enterprise with her domestic unhappiness, are well described at length in a book which makes a great show of candor, but which finally gives little coherent impression of the dancer's artistic creed beyond the glib hanky-panky of art, beauty, and the soul, and so on. There is no insistent definition, and no apparent intellectual understanding of a career which takes on, as a result, almost the appearance of a fluke.

This is owing partly to Miss St. Denis's lack of skill as a writer and partly to the suspicion that her candor is less than candid, which arises from a sort of vaporous style that is lush and rarely lucid. I think this mental attitude, which is exasperatingly coy and opaque, is suggested by such a line as in describing a friend, "She calls me Dance; I call her Poetry," or that "Afterwards, under a lamp, I discussed some matter of poetry or life with my dear friend." What matter?

She stood on the Palatine hill and wept. She wept at dawn before the Taj Mahal. She wept with Mr. Shawn near the lake in Ravinia by moonlight, and burst into tears before an audience somewhere else. She suggests none of the real greatness of personality of Isadora whose memoirs were so handsomely renamed by Dorothy Parker "Duncan Disorderly," or of the humanity that makes Yvette Guilbert's "Memoirs de Ma Vie" so memorable, or of the perception in art and searching mentality that make Angna Enters "First Person Plural" illuminating. Here is rather a vague recital of superficial events in a successful career coupled with a good deal of soul chit-chat.

The book, apart from its failure to bring any of its personalities to life, is much too long and detailed, and it has been carelessly edited.

Oasis of Peace

HOME AT LAST. By Ernst Harthern. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

IN this calm, beautiful, and disturbing novel about Palestine, Mr. Harthern writes with an imperturbable quiet that is like an echoing board, heightening the strength and dignity of his characters as well as the looming dangers of their new home. They are immigrant Jews from Russia, Poland, lately from Germany, who have come to Palestine to discover again the security of a homeland. Sholem Asch has just published his Palestine story, with its spiritual aspirations and its conquest of the Emek, the dead valley. This is here, too, in "Home at Last," for with the Emek fertile, and Haifa and Tel Aviv thriving, there are still further wastes to master; now the Jewish pioneers have pushed as far as Sodom and Gomorrah, coming at last to the very starting-point of their wanderings. It is a thrilling chapter in modern history, as the great circle swings around to the scene of its inception and the Jews stare once more at the pillar of salt that was Lot's wife. Harthern tells it well, on a sustained, always controlled poetic level.

But this is now twenty years after the pioneers of whom Asch writes first appeared in the Emek. Now more of the whole picture may be seen, and it is a picture not devoid of threat or the suspicion of betrayal.

The immigrants in Harthern's story have labored for twenty years to create a spot of peace in the world; as they look up from their work to see the planes in the sky, the ships of war in the harbor, to read of crisis in the news, they ask one another, is it for this that we have been brought here? Are we to become again the center and the brunt of rivalry and destruction? Harthern asks his questions and spares us none of the facts that hold in them possible answers. For himself, he has found it possible to end the book on a note of hope. His philosophy is uttered by characters who are too large-spirited to admit of despair; they see largely, in terms of centuries. But for the present the questions still hover over them, ominously.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER WITH A THEME SONG *Virginia Rath* (Crime Club: $2.)	Violent deaths of sinister Californian and trained nurse test abilities of Rocky Allan, Mike Dundas, and their wives.	Overabundance of characters and plot slightly confusing, but wind-up is logical and surprising.	Expert
CURTAINS FOR THE EDITOR *Thomas Polsky* (Dutton: $2.)	Newspaper chief skewered in private office. Bright reporter races over underworld trails to effective, but not surprising, solution.	About as good a newspaper story as you'll find—in spite of pretty obvious payoff and some over-cute passages.	First rate
AFTER THE VERDICT *Elizabeth Jordan* (Appleton-Century: $2.)	Janice Boyd rastled with gun-toting, drink-maddened step-mater. Resultant death brings Jan trouble, adventure, ultimate happiness.	Engagingly sentimental yarn of young girl who left home after tragedy to start life anew in anonymity of Manhattan.	Satisfactory
THE MAN WHO DIDN'T ANSWER *Inez Oellrichs* (Crime Club: $2.)	Pertinacious milkman won't believe friend killed wealthy aunt. Turning sleuth, he releases family skeletons in solving New England murder.	Forthrightly told tale of small town people, good, bad, and indifferent. Homespun detective outsmarts police in friendly and convincing fashion.	Good grade
ADVENTURES OF RICHARD HANNAY *John Buchan* (Houghton Mifflin: $2.50.)	"The Thirty-nine Steps," "Greenmantle," and "Mr. Standfast"—plenty of thrills by a master-craftsman.	Adventure in Scotland, in Mespot., on the Western front—wartime spy stories still fresh as paint.	*Semper virens*

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Each TO THE Other

FIRST REVIEWS

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Poet's Correspondence

THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM AND DOROTHY WORDSWORTH. The Later Years, 1821-1850. In three volumes. Arranged and edited by Ernest de Selincourt. New York: Oxford University Press. 1939. $21.

Reviewed by GEORGE McLEAN HARPER

THESE three large, handsome volumes complete the series in which Mr. de Selincourt has assembled most of the vast extant correspondence of Wordsworth and his sister. They cover the last thirty years of his life, whereas Dorothy's letters, which surpass his in geniality and naturalness, come to an earlier end, owing to the failure of her health. There are also a handful of letters by Mrs. Wordsworth, and since she was often William's amanuensis, many little paragraphs and postscripts are not merely the product of her pen but of her happy heart. About half the letters, *i.e.*, 571, in these three volumes are here printed for the first time, and many others from which only extracts were printed by former editors are now given in full. Twenty-six which were discovered too late for inclusion in their proper places as of the years 1794-1820 and which are, because of their earlier dates, of greater interest than most of the later correspondence, are given in an appendix. In these three volumes, containing 1,400 pages, there are 1,044 letters, of which Dorothy wrote 112.

The entire series probably contains the largest and most authentic mass of material that exists for the study of a great poet's life. In these concluding three volumes we find the circle of acquaintances widening and the family interest deepening, but there is revealed vastly less of genius, of hope and joy, of spiritual adventure than the earlier books record. Dorothy holds her own as a perfectly delightful woman, but William has become an amateur politician, a much perplexed business man, an over-anxious parent and grandparent, a meticulous critic of himself and others. No longer, except at rare intervals, does he impress one as a devoted lover of Nature and of Man as Man, or as a spontaneous singer. Notwithstanding Miss Edith Batho's gallant pleading for "the later Wordsworth," it is difficult to find in his last thirty years many gleams of the divine fire of his youth. This is what we must all regret. How we regard his extreme conservatism in matters of public policy depends on our own attitudes.

As a record of the life of a notable family, unspoiled by fashion, simple in taste and manners, deeply religious, highly cultivated, widely connected with people of every rank, and untiringly hospitable, these letters are valuable and, on the whole, charming. "The eternal note of sadness" is brought in, however, by the knowledge that their dearest friend, Coleridge, was sinking to his dismal end, by the decay of Dorothy's exquisite mind, by Dora's frequent illnesses, by the death of many old comrades—among them Lamb, Scott, Coleridge, and Southey—and chiefly by witnessing the premature aging of William Wordsworth. His poetical as well as his political ideals undergo a reversal. It is, for example, amazing to read his praise of "The Eclipse of the Sun," a poem he wrote in 1820, full of the 18th-century "gaudyverse" against which his earlier poetry was a victorious protest. The letters correct several misunderstandings.

By his patient collecting and perfect editing of this vast correspondence Mr. de Selincourt has earned the gratitude not only of all students of Wordsworth and his circle, but of all readers interested or capable of being interested in English family life throughout a period unsurpassed for progress and accomplishment in moral and intellectual culture since the Elizabethan age. His industry has been equalled by his penetration. He has corrected hundreds of misreadings by former editors. He has performed his extremely difficult task with courage, judgment, integrity, and taste.

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Thomas Wolfe

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SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 262)

MARK VAN DOREN:
JONATHAN GENTRY

Jonathan Gentry sailed, and told
the sea-winds:
"Your meadows are green with salt
and endless anger,
What you look down on, flying is
flat death.
. . . . . .
The American meadows wait
Sea-green with only grass
And heaving with God's promises
to men."

Our Medieval Heritage

MEDIEVAL PANORAMA. By G. G. Coulton. New York: The Macmillan Co. (Cambridge University Press). 1938. $4.

Reviewed by MILTON L. ZISOWITZ

NO one scholar has done more to destroy the myth of the so-called "Dark Ages" than Dr. G. G. Coulton of Cambridge University. In the past, his works have concerned themselves with specific phases of the Middle Ages, such as religion and village life. Now, in "Medieval Panorama," he has taken the whole complex tapestry of English civilization from the Conquest to the Reformation as his subject. And since orators today, have become increasingly fond of comparing our own times to the "Dark Ages," Dr. Coulton's work takes on a real contemporary significance.

William Blake's engraving, "The Canterbury Pilgrims," is used as a jacket for the book. Seldom has the jacket so well epitomized the contents of the book. For just as Chaucer, in his Prologue, has given us a picture of all classes in English medieval life, so has Dr. Coulton attempted to give his reader a complete picture of the complex life which was medieval England. Of course, a great part of the volume is devoted to the church. This is as it should be, because the church and religion dominated the medieval scene. However, Dr. Coulton is primarily interested in the church as one of the many forces, perhaps the greatest, which molded society not only in medieval England, but also in twentieth-century England and America. For one of the great virtues of the book is that it constantly emphasizes our own heritage from the Middle Ages.

And is that heritage one which justifies the term "Dark Ages"? Not at all. For despite such horrible things as the plague and the Inquisition, the Middle Ages gave to Western civilization many priceless treasures. Dr. Coulton properly emphasizes the benign and the progressive contributions of the Middle Ages to civilization.

In his chapter on the life of the common man and his problems, Dr. Coulton points out many other contributions. The seeds of democracy in England and America were planted in the Middle Ages. We are too prone to forget, in our emphasis upon medieval feudalism, such men as Wyclif and Langland, the author of "Piers Plowman," and such movements as Lollardry and the Peasants' Revolt of the fourteenth century. These were, doubtless, great contributions to the rise of democracy.

Here, then, is a book not only for the scholar, but also for the intelligent layman. Dr. Coulton has not attempted to write a "popular" book. His notes and his index help to make the work one which will be useful to students of the Middle Ages. There is nothing, in this volume, of the annoying patronizing of the reader which we find in so many "popular" books. And yet Dr. Coulton has made his story vital enough and clear enough so that the layman may read it with interest and with profit. It is, indeed, an important picture of the roots of contemporary English and American civilization.

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The New Books

Art

FILIPPINO LIPPI. A Critical Study. By Katherine B. Neilson. Harvard University Press. $7.50.

This handsomely made, large in-octavo reveals throughout a refreshingly undogmatic, thorough, and cautious scholarship, and as well, considering the refractoriness of the theme, a sufficiently literary character. Miss Neilson, unlike many scholars of more maturity, realizes that there are often several equally valid interpretations of any critical or historical problem. She is candid enough to admit this when she presents her own conclusions. All this is good augury for her future.

Here is not the place to enumerate her answers to the numerous critical problems with which she deals. Abridging sharply, she gives deservedly greater praise than is usual to Filippino's frescoes in the Brancacci chapel, she makes numerous new suggestions as to chronology, traces many unnoticed influences of contemporary painters upon the rather protean son of Fra Filippo, finally gives unusual attention and approval to the frescoes of the Minerva and Sta. Maria Novella which are generally dismissed summarily as unpleasantly manneristic. On the critical side her points are made specifically, soberly, and with constant reference to the abundant illustrations.

The book is sensibly provided with footnotes, bibliography, and index and is both convenient and indispensable to the studious lover of early Italian painting.

F. J. M.

Biography

BORN TO TROUBLE. By Captain Patrick A. Meade. Putnams. 1939. $3.

When a publisher admits in print that some of his author's stories may be tall, you can bet they're tall. And some of these are a little high as well. The jacket of the book lists ten lurid occupations that fell to the lot of Captain Meade, but that is a modest accounting. From his boyhood when he poached expertly and attended his father's tuition in the art of upending bulls barehanded and hurling wardens into cesspools, his life was a succession of troubles. He ran away to Africa at sixteen and soon was winning beds and breakfasts from a Suez madame. At seventeen he joined the Scots Guards of Egypt to fight the rebel tribesmen, when he happened to be on the Saharan side of harem windows. Returing to Europe, he put in four years with the World War, a grand affair of sufficient slaughter and roistering, you would think, to hold him for a while, but still he was restless, so he rushed to India's Northwest Frontier to help quell the Afghan disturbances. His latter season there saw him with the Intelligence Department, when he had a high old time tracking communists, guarding visiting royalty, and teaching the enemy how to catch trout by tickling them.

At this point, if you have followed attentively the diversions of Captain Meade, you will be ready for a rest. But not he. A dozen adventures with the Singapore Police are yet to come, for smuggling, piracy, white slavery, and still more communism had to be put down when he was transferred to the Malay States, and in his spare time he had considerable to do with gin slings, football, men amok, and tigers. Though you will have enjoyed him, you will be glad to drop exhausted in China from the iron clutch of his prose. This is an excellent adventure yarn.

H. D.

Fiction

BLUEWATER. By Warwick Deeping. Knopf. 1939. $2.50.

Mr. Deeping is still trying to snatch the simplicities out of the fire. Feeling, as do many others, that modernism has brought with it more evils than it is worth, he sees salvation in the backward turn. If man will revert to the soil, to work with hands, and to living rightly rather than thinking brightly, he will yet be saved. In the present novel Mr. Deeping points his moral with a tale of two contrasting communities in rural England.

"Bluewater" is the name of the extremely modern and effete development managed by a real old-fashioned villain, who slugs his enemies in the back of the neck to steal their purses, holds his love letters in order to reap blackmail when all passion's spent, and circulates the viler rumors about his competitors. There has not been such a thoroughgoing Jack Dalton villain in years.

At the cottages and club houses of Bluewater the tired and the vicious of London's intelligentsia relax at a price, while at "Forge Farm" near by a few who have left "Bluewater" put into practice the maxims of the simple life and battle the influences of their parasitic neighbors. As usual, Mr. Deeping is able to create his characters as he needs them and to imbue them with an easy sort of actuality despite their having to be types to suit his purpose. With his old sureness of timing, he turns and twists the plot dexterously and holds true love

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aloof until the moment is ripe. These later novels of Warwick Deeping may be slighter than the earlier ones we came to know him by, but they are all in the same vein and dedicated to the same purposes.

G. G.

THE MIDDLE WINDOW. By Elizabeth Goudge. Coward-McCann. 1939. $2.50.

A sentimental romance playing in two realms, the Scotland of the Young Pretender and the Scotland of the present, this is the tale of Judy Cameron, who coming to live in an old Scottish manor and promptly falling in love with its owner, finds herself translated into the world of the past. Intimations of love and suffering that the old house has known seize upon her almost before she has crossed its threshold, and insensibly she slips from the pleasant world of father and mother and love into a tumultuous episode of the past. The story swings back in time to present a Judy and Ian Macdonald whose love has been arrested by tragedy and whose only consolation is their belief that such love as theirs must bloom again under happier circumstances. It is this second blooming which the twentieth-century Judy and Ian find at the end of the book. Miss Goudge writes with smoothness but the bones of the novel creak. It is stereotyped sentimental romance.

A. L.

To be published
Thursday, April 13

Autobiography

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THE DAY WILL COME. By Elizabeth Marion. Crowell. 1939. $2.

Although set in the wheatlands of Washington state, this is in no sense a "soil novel." Both the background, which appears rather idyllic, and the familiar domestic narrative, are subordinate to the characters: a farmer's widow and her temperamentally varied children, whose relationships are depicted during a certain twenty-four hours. The widow turns out to be a classically selfish mother, and the children pretty well-established types; they are all necessary steps in the demonstration of a problem, but they are not alive and convincing as human beings. Only one, Harry, the son who sticks to the land, whose twenty-first birthday is the story's time-limit, is real. The strong, silent Harry must be to most readers a pain in the neck, but it is through his annoying rugged individualism, his determined belief in himself and his farm that the author makes her real feeling for the country impressive. She suffers one characteristic of a young writer, in being so absorbed in what she is doing as to neglect the pulse and temperature of the hypothetical public. In other words, she is not objective or selective, but these things she can learn. She has that which is not so easily learned, a confidence in setting down what she thinks and feels which, if at times a little solemn, is not cocksure, and reveals a serious interest in working out a means of expression, and the ability to do so.

I. W. A.

ONCE AROUND THE BLOCK. By John Klempner. Scribners. 1939. $2.50.

It is saying something for a young novelist to call his second novel better than his first; however, Mr. Klempner, a talented but irritating writer, clings to his chief weakness, which is an excess of facility. "No Stork at Nine," his first novel, had some good things in it, but on the whole was a drawn out imitation of a Dorothy Parker story. "Once Around the Block" is much better; it has a good theme and some good writing; but these qualities are counterbalanced by an oversimplified view of things in general, and by a tendency on the part of the characters and the author to be clever to the verge of hysteria. The story centers in a Brooklyn family of Saturday's children, dependent for a living on the vagaries of the capitalist system in the form of a chocolate factory, operated by a management credibly selfish, but incredibly lecherous. The novel places various characters and situations in skillful narrative counterpoint; it is at its best in presenting the Holts, an average and attractive family made credible and interesting. There are many well written scenes, building up to a readable novel and almost a good one. It would be a good one if Mr. Klempner's sympathies were somehow more substantial and less facile. The inevitable strike at the factory misses effectiveness through oversimplification. And we wish Mr. Klempner didn't so frequently seem to be snickering at the sexual misadventures of his characters.

G. S.

History

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS. By Lieut.-Col. Clyde H. Metcalfe. Putnam. 1939. $4.50.

Until the passage of the years has superseded it, this will do as the standard history of that most prideful fighting corps, the marines. Uniform with Spalding's history of the army and Knox's of the navy, it is more candid than either, citing book, chapter, and verse for defeat and stupidity as well as for brilliance and triumph. The period from the Civil War down occupies more than three-fifths of the book; and this is correct, since the marines, long in existence, have assumed an important role in the national military and political economy only in recent years. They have borne the unpleasant burden of the occupation and administration of many banana republics in that period. We have heard often of the why of these invasions, both pro and con; but never before this book has anyone thought of the how—the heroisms and forbearances of men whose names never made the headlines. For this Col. Metcalfe deserves our gratitude and that of the corps which has found so good a chronicler.

F. P.

Travel

BLUE WATER VAGABOND. By Dennis Puleston. Doubleday, Doran. 1939. $3.

This is a book to excite the land-locked dreams of all who love far ports and gallant voyages, for Dennis Puleston has done what most young men, and many an old one, would do if they weren't anchored ashore by responsibilities or lack of initiative. He gave up his job in an English bank, bought the *Uldra,* a sturdy yawl, and with one companion set out on a series of voyages that were to take him over most of the world and last nearly six years. When he reached the West Indies he took aboard another sailor, the female West Indian Turtle Hound, named Tiger because of her savagery in flipping great turtles upon their backs—an actual profession for a dog in those islands. Penniless in Tortola, he accepted the management of a broken down coconut plantation and made it pay until a hurricane wiped it out. Then there came a slew of trips, with shipwreck on the Hatteras banks and a search for fifteen dollars' worth of sunken treasure to keep him busy.

Two years' cruising on the yacht *Director,* owned by the Fahnestocks, took him through the Pacific islands, but with the beginning of this trip his book is largely composed of thrice-told tales, for the Fahnestock boys have written their account of it in "Stars to Windward," and their mother, who joined them in Tahiti, has told her story in "I Ran Away to Sea at Fifty." They had misery and adventure in alternate doses, malaria and cannibals who captured them only to get their tobacco, the death of a comrade and the bombing of Peiping. Mr. Puleston finally set out for home by train across China, then roughed it through Russia and Holland. His story is an engaging yarn.

H. D.

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

AMONG many interesting *aperçus* in Leonard Bacon's *Semi-Centennial,* Old Q. was specially pleased by a tribute to John Bellows of the little pocket French dictionary. We were brought up on Bellows, which Bacon calls "the perfect model of what such a book should be," but we haven't heard it mentioned for years. ☞Timely for this season is Lee Wulff's Handbook of Freshwater Fishing (Stokes, $1.75) which discusses the tactics of angling for all the well-known game fish of North America. The publishers have made it in pocket-size in a waterproof case. ☞Another freshwater book to please riparian connoisseurs is *Life Along the Connecticut River,* a large volume of fine photographs by five New Englanders (Stephen Daye Press, $3.75). ☞Schulte's Book Store (80 Fourth Ave., N. Y. C.) is sending out a monthly Pick-the-Winners order blank, listing forthcoming books which they believe likely to be collectors' items. They will buy back at 50% of the First Edition price any volumes the Winner-Picker decides (within 2 weeks) he does not wish to keep. ☞We think they'll have to choose their titles a little more sharply for the Edition trade: Kathleen Norris, for instance, is a Rental Library item rather than a Collectors. ☞Schulte's note, by the way, that a Bibliography of G. A. Henty is coming along from Scribner's and suggest picking up old Henties before the rise. ☞It is not always easy to know just why one finds oneself cackling. In a notice from the Viking Press was an air of tender dismay, an implication of the whole vexation and complexity of the publisher's trade, which gave idiotic Old Q. in one of his infrequent salvations of amusement. It said "The portrait of John Steinbeck sent out with review copies of *The Grapes of Wrath* was erroneously credited to Stjernstrom. The correct name of the artist is Bo Beskov."

☞The Eucalyptus Press at Mills College, California, has printed 250 copies of an address on "Books: Backgrounds and Foregrounds" given at the college last December by George Hedley. From this booklet we learn that Mills College celebrates December 4, the birthday of Thomas Carlyle, as its own birthday, in honor of Carlyle's remark that the true university is a collection of books. ☞In an envelope-stuffer from the Princeton University Press we found an excellent remark: "No transaction in the arts is complete until at least one other person has received what the creator has imagined and tried to communicate." This occurs in an advertisement for *How To Read Fiction* by Gordon H. Gerould. ☞Another P.U.P. book we are delighted to honor is R. K. Root's *The Poetical Career of Alexander Pope*—"whose reputation," says Princeton, "is now very decidedly on the upswing."

☞A good Paschal gift for those who carry a green bag (do they still?) would be *The Spirit of the Legal Profession,* by Robert N. Wilkin (Yale Press) which "seeks to imbue lawyers with a spirit of unselfish devotion." ☞The latest catalogue of Rare from the Scribner Bookstore is high spots in Economics and Political Theory. For instance, a first of H. S. Chamberlain's *Grundlagen des XIXteen Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1899), 2 vols., $35. This was the first book to expound the superiority of the "Nordic" and became (Scribner says) the Old Testament of Nazism. A notable oddity for the political collector. ☞A first edition of Marx & Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (London, 1848) lists at $750; it is excessively scarce in its earliest form, without the umlaut in the famous final sentence: "Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt Euch!"

☞A number of Baker Street Irregulars have reported on the movie *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* which sounds like a fine cast in a tripey picture. But it makes timely an interesting maritime note from Professor A. L. Strout (Lubbock, Texas), who calls his communication

Sherlock Holmes and the *Norah Creina*

The *Gloria Scott,* the *Lone Star,* the *Sea Unicorn* of Dundee play a part in the stories of Sherlock Holmes; and Dr. Watson mentions other ships incidentally in Holmes's cases: the *Sophy Anderson,* for example, and "the shocking affair of the Dutch steamship *Friesland,* which so nearly cost us both our lives." "The Resident Patient" in the *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1893) ends thus:

> From that night nothing has been seen of the three murderers by the police, and it is surmised at Scotland Yard that they were among the passengers of the ill-fated steamer *Norah Creina,* which was lost some years ago with all hands upon the Portuguese coast, some leagues to the north of Oporto.

I always regretted the loss of that ship —such a pretty Irish name!—but I have been glad to discover that Dr. Watson was in error, for, only a year before, the *Norah Creina* carried Mr. Todd safely into Honolulu: see R. L. Stevenson's *The Wrecker,* which appeared serially in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1891 and as a book in 1892. Possibly the change from the Pacific to the Atlantic proved, ultimately, too severe a one for the gallant barque.

ALAN LANG STROUT.

The change was indeed severe: not only from Pacific to Atlantic but from a schooner (not barque) to steamship. Putting engines in her undoubtedly made her cranky.

☞Speaking of detective stores, *The Bigger They Come,* by A. A. Fair (Morrow) is original and entertaining; the massive Bertha Cool is a welcome addition to the ranks of female detectives. We should like to hear from some lawyer whether the legal anomaly on which the

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STAR AT NOON

by

LOUISE REDFIELD PEATTIE

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climax depends is actually workable. If so, Mr. Fair has invented a sure way of committing crime and escaping punishment.

☞Old Q has been checking up *S.R.L.* circulation figures and now prints his annual Honor Roll of the first ten States.

They are:—

1. New York
2. California
3. Pennsylvania
4. Illinois
5. Massachusetts
6. Ohio
7. Michigan
8. New Jersey
9. Connecticut
10. Minnesota

☞Several comments may be made on this list. Illinois is only 16 subscribers behind Pennsylvania for 3rd place. Texas and Wisconsin both crowd Minnesota very close for number 10. New York City has only 7 less subscribers than all the rest of N. Y. State. The lowest in the scale is Nevada. It interests us to note that the District of Columbia has 2 more subscribers than Indiana. It seems to us that the literary Hoosier State should be able to alter this. If N. Y. State were considered apart from N. Y. City it would stand next after California. The figures were taken as of the issue of December 31, 1938.

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Double-Crostics: No. 263

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-C	■	2-H	3-S	4-T	■	5-I	■	6-U	7-J	8-C	9-S	■	10-A	11-E	12-H	■	13-L
14-K	15-B	16-V	17-N	■	18-B	19-U	20-T	21-D	22-V	23-F	24-S	25-J	26-W	■	27-Y	28-A	■
29-L	30-R	31-Q	32-I	33-G	■	34-T	35-D	36-K	37-J	38-P	39-B	40-U	41-H	■	42-M	43-R	44-J
45-W	■	46-P	47-O	48-L	■	49-T	50-X	51-S	52-G	■	53-Q	54-S	55-M	56-A	57-R	■	58-E
59-I	■	60-J	61-Q	62-M	63-Y	64-U	■	65-I	66-J	67-C	68-F	■	69-Q	70-V	71-X	72-N	73-H
74-L	■	75-W	76-G	■	77-T	78-L	79-G	80-H	81-I	■	82-B	83-V	84-Y	85-K	86-P	87-C	88-F
89-R	■	90-I	91-M	■	92-V	93-L	94-N	95-I	96-E	97-J	98-K	99-H	■	100-N	101-S	102-Y	103-R
104-P	105-B	106-T	■	107-G	108-Q	109-M	110-E	■	111-L	112-T	113-V	114-D	115-O	116-B	■	117-E	118-H
119-R	■	120-U	121-M	122-A	123-S	124-X	■	125-I	126-F	127-J	128-X	■	129-B	130-N	131-T	132-A	133-W
■	134-G	135-O	136-M	■	137-Y	138-E	139-F	140-M	■	141-G	142-M	143-L	144-W	145-F	■	146-T	147-O
148-X	149-Q	■	150-R	151-P	152-S	153-F	154-L	155-G	156-T	157-B	158-V	159-Q	160-N	■	161-U	162-G	163-W
164-D	■	165-Y	166-K	167-M	168-A	■	169-G	170-O	171-X	172-W	173-X	174-D	■	175-E	176-H	■	177-P
178-U	179-O	180-V	181-Y	182-L	■	183-T	184-D	185-V	186-H	187-K	188-L	■	■	■	■	■	■

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Activities of circus followers (slang).

B. Abstracts, abridgments.

C. Norse god.

D. French Cathedral city.

E. Tune or musical instrument (Psalms).

F. Disputatious.

G. Figure of speech for prosperity (2 wds.).

H. London quarter, scene of Thomas Burke's stories.

I. Tree trunks or columns for Teutonic worship.

J. State.

K. Scene of "Prothalamion."

L. Character in the "Taming of the Shrew" (first name).

M. Intimate (comp.).

N. Animals of the Lutrinae family.

O. Moves along slowly.

P. Periodical edited by Defoe (1704-13).

Q. An Irving character (first name).

R. Mother of Helle and Phrixos.

S. English dramatist and architect (1664-1726).

T. Counterfeitingly.

U. Capital of Puerto Rico.

V. Engages one's attention.

W. English poet (1844-1930).

X. Network structure.

Y. Arched, vaulted.

WORDS

122 132 56 28 10 168

116 82 18 39 15 105 157 129

1 67 8 87

114 174 164 21 35 184

96 58 175 117 138 110 11

68 145 126 153 139 23 88

33 134 169 76 155 141 162 52 79 107

41 80 2 12 118 176 186 99 73

5 81 65 90 59 32 95 125

7 127 25 44 97 37 60 66

98 14 166 36 187 85

13 78 74 154 188 29 48 111 93 143 182

140 55 91 136 121 167 142 109 62 42

94 130 72 160 17 100

147 135 115 47 170 179

38 151 177 104 86 46

61 159 108 53 69 31 149

57 89 150 30 119 103 43

51 3 9 24 152 101 54 123

183 146 34 156 131 77 112 20 106 49 4

64 178 120 6 161 40 19

16 158 180 113 83 70 185 92 22

75 172 144 45 163 26 133

148 171 124 71 50 173 128

181 165 102 27 137 84 63

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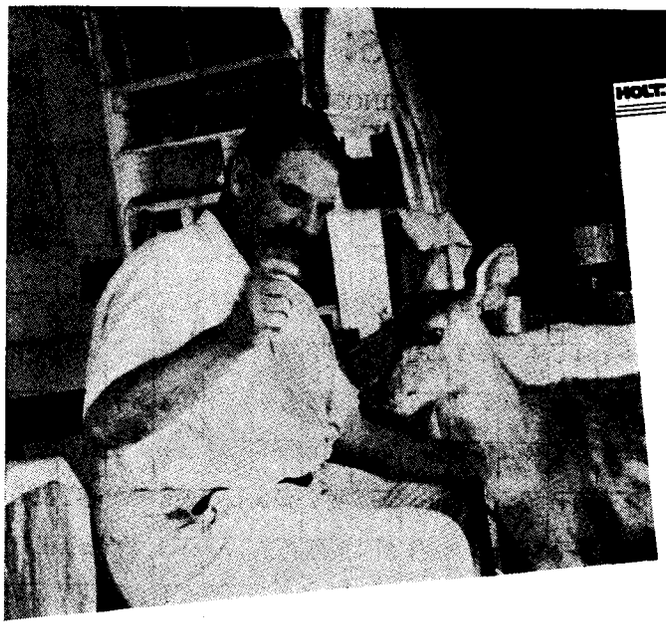

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